

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08
TRSE-00 /066 W
-----041225Z 021115 /14

P 041030Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8580
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL ADANA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL IZMIR PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: TURKISH LABOR PARTY CONGRESS

SUMMARY: THE PRO-MARXIST TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TIP) HELD ITS FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS SINCE IT WAS DISBANDED BY THE MILITARY IN 1971. PARTY SPOKESMEN CALLED FOR LEGALIZATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY, OUTLINED POLICIES FAVORING CLOSER TIES WITH "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES AND ATTACKED CURRENT TURKISH GOVERNMENT. OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (RPP) AND ITS ELECTION ALLY, THE LEFTIST LABOR CONFEDERATION, WERE ALSO CHIDED FOR "BOURGEOIS" TENDENCIES, BUT TIP PRESIDENT CALLED FOR COOPERATION WITH RPP AGAINST "FASCIST" AND "IMPERIALIST" FORCES. NO DECISION WAS MADE AT CONGRESS ON TIP'S DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN 1977 ELECTIONS, BUT NATION-WIDE ORGANIZING EFFORT SEEMS TO INDICATE THIS OPTION IS BEING KEPT OPEN, PERHAPS AS BARGAINING TACTIC WITH RPP WHICH APPARENTLY HOPES TO WIN TIP SUPPORT. PERCENTAGE OF ELECTORATE TIP COULD ATTRACT IS UNDOUBTEDLY SMALL, BUT MARGIN COULD BE HELPFUL TO RPP IN UPCOMING ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TURKIYE ISCI PARTISI - TIP), ONE OF A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUMBER OF SMALL MARXIST PARTIES, HELD ITS FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS SINCE ITS REESTABLISHMENT IN 1975. DISBANDED AND ITS LEADERS ARRESTED IN 1971 FOLLOWING THE MILITARY "COUP BY MEMORANDUM", TIP HERALDED ITS COMEBACK BY GATHERING MORE THAN "100 DELEGATES FROM 19 PROVINCES AT THREE-DAY CONGRESS WHICH WAS HELD FEBRUARY 26-28 IN ISTANBUL. OPENING SPEECH WAS DELIVERED BY PARTY PRESIDENT BEHICE BORAN TO A CROWD ESTIMATED BY PRESS TO NUMBER 5,000.

2. BORAN, WHO WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON IN 1974 AMNESTY, CALLED FOR LEGALIZING THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND FOR READMISSION TO TURKEY OF THOSE EXILED IN CONNECTION WITH ITS ACTIVITIES. SHE AND PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL WERE CRITICAL OF CURRENT LEADERSHIP OF LEFTIST CONFEDERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNIONS (DISK) WITH WHICH TIP HAS DEVELOPED CLOSE TIES DURING LATE SIXTIES. DISK LEADERSHIP WAS CHARACTERIZED AS "UNION ARISTOCRACY" AND ACCUSED OF SACRIFICING INTERESTS OF WORKERS FOR SAKE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY PARTICULARLY IN ITS ALLIANCE WITH OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (RPP) FOR COMING ELECTIONS. (COMMENT: DISK AND TIP HAVE REPORTEDLY LOCKED HORNS OVER DISK ATTEMPT TO CONTROL UNIONS STILL INFLUENCED BY TIP.)

3. ON FOREIGN POLICY, BORAN EXPRESSED TIP SUPPORT FOR THIRD-WORLD ROLE FOR TURKEY AND CALLED FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH PROGRESSIVE, ANTI-IMPERIALIST AND SOCIALIST NATIONS. SHE CHARACTERIZED CLIFFORD MISSION AS INDICATION THAT "INCUMBENT BOURGEOISIE" WAS UNABLE TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT COURSE FOR TURKEY. SHE ALSO LASHED OUT AT GOVERNMENT'S "OPPRESSIVE" POLICIES AGAINST POPULATION OF EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY. WHERE A NUMBER OF TIP'S NEWLY ORGANIZED PROVINCES ARE CONCENTRATED. (COMMENT: IN 1965 AND 1969 ELECTIONS, THE FORMER TIP DID PARTICULARLY WELL IN THIS AREA APPARENTLY ATTRACTING VOTES OF MINORITY GROUPS.)

4. ALTHOUGH URGING JOINT EFFORT WITH RPP AGAINST "FASCISM" AND "IMPERIALISM", BORAN ALSO CRITICIZED THAT PARTY FOR BEING INFLUENCED BY "BOURGEOIS" ELEMENTS, AND TOOK EXCEPTION TO ARGUMENT AD-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VANCED BY NUMBER OF LEFTISTS THAT ALL "SOCIALIST" FORCES SHOULD UNITE WITH RPP. THESE PORTIONS OF SPEECH MUST HAVE MADE UNCOMFORTABLE RPP PROVINCIAL CHAIRMAN WHO ATTENDED CONGRESS AS OBSERVER. HOWEVER, DESPITE TIP CHIDING RHETORIC, HIS PRESENCE AND RPP CHAIRMAN ECEVIT'S TELEGRAM WISHING CONGRESS SUCCESS INDICATE THAT LEFT-OF-CENTER RPP IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN KEEPING CHANNELS OPEN TO BORAN'S GROUP. WITH DISK'S FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT LAST WEEK THAT IT WILL SUPPORT RPP IN COMING ELECTION, ECEVIT HAS ATTRACTED MOST IMPORTANT LEFTIST GROUP TO HIS BANNER. HOWEVER, FURTHER EFFORTS TO GATHER IN SMALLER FACTIONS OF LEFT SUCH AS TIP MAY BE HANDICAPPED BY SQUABBLES BETWEEN THESE GROUPS, SUCH AS OCCURRED IN 1975 WHEN NUCLEUS OF OLD TIP SUFFERED SERIOUS SPLIT. AT THAT TIME ALI AYBAR FORMED SOCIALIST (NOW SOCIALIST REVOLUTION) PARTY WHICH PERHAPS NOT COINCIDENTALLY, HELD ITS CONGRESS IN ANKARA SAME WEEKEND AS TIP.

5. TIP CONGRESS WITHHELD UNTIL LATER DECISION ON RUNNING CANDIDATES IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION. STORY CURRENTLY CIRCULATING HERE IS THAT TIP WILL NOT PUT ITSELF ON BALLOT AND WILL SUPPORT RPP. HOWEVER,

NATION-WIDE EFFORT TO ORGANIZE IN 199 OF TURKEY'S 67 PROVINCES (ELECTION LAW REQUIRES AT LEAST 15) AND ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ORGANIZATION WORK IN 17 MORE PROVINCES HAS BEEN COMPLETED, COMBINED WITH FACT THAT CONGRESS APPROVED CHANGES IN PRECEPTS TO ASSURE LEGAL RIGHT TO OPERATE AS POLITICAL PARTY, INDICATES TIP IS INTERESTED IN KEEPING THIS OPTION OPEN. THIS TACTIC ALSO GIVES TIP CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE WITH RPP.

6. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE HOW MUCH SUPPORT THIS SMAAL, PRO-MARXIST PARTY COULD ATTRACT. IN 1965 AND 1969 ELECTIONS WHEN THE FORMER TIP LAST ENTERED CANDIDATES, IT POLLED ABOUT THREE PERCENT OF NATIONAL ELECTORATE. (IN ISTANBUL, WHERE 38 DEPUTY SEATS WILL BE AT STAKE, THE TIP WON 7.9 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN 1965 AND 5.8 PERCENT IN 1969.) FOLLOWING SPLIT IN PARTY IN 1975 AND NOW THAT DISK SEEMS FIRMLY IN RPP CAMP, TIP PROBABLY COULD NOT REPEAT THIS PERFORMANCE. HOWEVER, WITH 1977 ELECTION SHAPING UP INTO CLOSE CONTEST, TIP MARGIN COULD BE HELPFUL TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RPP.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISTANB00796
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: ISTANBUL
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Litigation History:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3210160
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH LABOR PARTY CONGRESS SUMMARY: THE PRO-MARXIST TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TIP) HELD ITS FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS SINCE IT WAS DISBANDED BY
TAGS: PINT, TU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/82c5adbd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009